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FUNERAL SERMON

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EXTRACTS FROM

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF

MRS. MELINDA HARDING,

IN SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS.,

JAN. 7, 1857.

BY

W. C. WHITCOMB.

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"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, (see Acts, Chapters 13, 14, 19, and 20,) that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver: ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward." 2 Cor. 1 : 3-12.

PREFACE.

After Mrs. Harding's death, the family friends of the deceased urgently requested a copy of the following sermon for their own private use, and the perusal of other relatives not able to be present at the funeral; and a copy of the manuscript, notwithstanding its numerous imperfections, was cheerfully furnished them. Subsequently a desire has been expressed that the same be printed in more permanent form, in connection with a brief obituary of another valued member of the afflicted household; and although there is so little intrinsic merit in the hastily prepared production, originally written without the remotest thought of its ever being solicited for publication, nevertheless I cannot find it in my heart to withhold the same from the press and a larger circle of acquaintances, especially as I am about to remove to some other portion of the Lord's vineyard, and may not again be favored with an opportunity of rendering additional service to the loved ones of Southbridge.

The worth of *sympathy*, human and divine, is unspeakably great. Preachers of the gospel are not the only individuals who have "Shady Side" experiences in their history; and one of the chief advantages of the keenest sufferings which they are ofttimes doomed to undergo in the providence of God, or by the injustice of man, is the qualification thereby received to *sympathise* more deeply with all the sorrowing and distressed; yea, they are thus empowered to become "sons of consolation" and better ministers of that pitying Savior "who comforteth them in all their tribulation, that they may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God." Among my pastoral labors, those performed in "houses of mourning," when "weeping with them that wept," and administering the "balm of Gilead" to bruised and bleeding hearts, are looked back upon with the most satisfaction. The benefit has been mutual. And there have the strongest and tenderest, the most sacred and enduring friendships been formed. Nor could there be any more cheering commendations, next to the words which fall from the lips of him who says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me," than those embodied in the lines of one of our Christian poets:

"When life's scenes were almost o'er,
And wearied feet pressed near the shore,
Thou wert there with words of love,
Telling of the home above,
  And of him who died to save,
  And redeem us from the grave.

When some cherished form was hid
'Neath the mournful coffin lid,
And our hearts with grief were filled,
Thy kind words the storm has stilled,
  Words that live in memory yet,
  Words we never can forget."

"Oh that my words were now written!" exclaimed Job, amid the dim star-light of the old Jewish dispensation, "oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!" But if words of

truth, uttered by men of God, wheather patriarchs, prophets, apostles, missionaries ministers, or private Christians, are so indellibly engraved on human *hearts* as never to be forgotten or obliterated, it is a far better and nobler wsy to perpetuate one's influence for good than through leaden types or chiseled monuments. And by one imbued with the spirit of Christ, the kind remembrances, warm thanks and grateful blessings of those afflicted " in body, mind, or estate," will be vastly more prized than all the flatteries of the great, the gifts of the rich, or the hollow applause of the worldly prosperous. A single *tear* of gratitude and of love in the eyes of the former is of greater value than any number of *words* of praise from the lips of the latter. While one complacent *smile* from Him who has been " made perfect through sufferings," and who is preeminently the " mourner's Friend," eclipses al other testimonials of approbation.

Ours is indeed " a world of trials," as is so often said and written; but trials are " mercies in disguise," for which we shall have reason to bless God throughout eternity. We are journeying through a " vale of tears ;" but this is needful in a disciplinery state of being, to fit us for that higher sphere where " all tears shall be wiped away from all faces." Many of us are called to pass through *fiery furnaces*, sometimes heated by the loving hand of the Almighty, and sometimes heated by the hands of erring men, but in either case, if there be one with us " in form like unto the Son of God," we shall escape unhurt from the fiercest flames, and " like gold seven times purified," be made " meet for the Master's use " and prepared for every good work.

" We can do all things, and can bear
All sufferings, if our Lord be there."

The removal, by death, of friends, whom God takes directly to himself, is in re ality among the least of life's varied trials. When assured that our loss, however grievous, is their eternal gain, well may our joy more than counterbalance our sorrow, and we be incited to aspire after glory, honor and immortality in the Paradise above, where with them we may be re-united in endless fellowship, where the word *farewell* is never spoken, where " the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."

" Our rest is in heaven, our rest is not here,
Then why should we murmur, though trials are near?
Be hushed these sad spirits, the worst that can come
But shortens our journey and hastens us home ! " w. c. w.

Globe Village, July, 1857.

DISCOURSE.

John 17 : 24.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am ; that they may behold my glory.

There are two classes of persons in our world, if indeed it be proper to divide them into two classes, of whose future happiness we may rest assured from the teachings of Reason and of Revelation, viz., *children* dying in infancy, and those who are "converted and become as little children." With regard to the latter, as well as the former, may it truthfully be said, that "of such is the kingdom of Heaven." According to Scripture, "it is well" with the young child who dies, for Jesus says, "Suffer the little one to come unto me;" and *it is well with all Christians* when they die, whether in the morning, noon, or evening of life, for the same compassionate Redeemer, who has loved them, and received their love in return, furthermore says, as in the beautiful words of the text, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory."

To be *with Christ*, who is "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," is *the Heaven of all true believers*. It is their chosen and appropriate home, with an atmosphere of light, love and purity, exactly adapted to their regenerated and spiritualized natures. But it is natural and reasonable to enquire, what there is in being with Jesus Christ which entitles the enjoyments thereof to be thus regarded. What superior good, what exalted blessedness, will the multitudes of the redeemed find in the presence of their Savior, which will so fully satisfy their desires, and make it a glorious Heaven of peace and rapture to their souls?

It will be my main design on the present funeral occasion, to

answer these and kindred enquiries, and to unfold to you, so far as I am able, the exceeding riches and preciousness of the "saint's everlasting rest," or at least to give you some faint *glimpses* of the wonderfulness of that inheritance which they are destined to enjoy in the presence and companionship of the Son of God. And methinks it will impart a peculiar interest to our theme, if we bear in mind, that a much-endeared and greatly-prized friend, so recently a living occupant of this ancient habitation, has just gone up from you, to enjoy, we doubt not, the celestial happiness now being described, yea the bliss unutterable brought to view in my text.

> "How blest is our friend, now bereft
> Of all that could burden her mind!
> How happy the soul that has left
> This wearisome body behind."

Say, is it not delightful to think that while considering the blessedness of being with Christ in Heaven, we are considering the nature, extent and duration of the very joy which fills the sainted spirit at the present hour, when we, with moistened eyes and saddened hearts, are performing these solemn rites in honor of the departed?

Those who have "Christ formed within them the hope of glory," and who "die in the Lord," are "blessed from henceforth," as saith the word of Inspiration; that is, their souls do not sleep with their bodies between the night of death and the morning of the resurrection day, in accordance with the theory of some in modern times, but are "blessed" with pure and unalloyed felicity *from this time forth* and forevermore, although subsequent to the reunion of the resurrection body to the ransomed spirit, they will be more fully capacitated for an augmentation of pleasures never-ending. Hence "to die is gain;" not merely *will* be gain at some distant period of time or eternity, but *is* gain in the *present* tense; for the saved enter at once upon the enjoyment of their Beloved,—so soon as they close their eyes upon earth and earthly things, they open them on Jesus and heavenly things. But why do the principal ingredients of their enrapturing joy consist in being "with" the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and "beholding his glory?"

1. They find themselves in the immediate and abiding presence

of One who is infinitely *dearer* to their renewed hearts than all others; to whom they are joined in closer, sweeter, and holier bonds than to any being beside in the universe.*

2. They have an object of love and adoration before them, possessed of supreme *excellencies*, one suited to employ all their intellectual and moral faculties, and to fill the utmost capacities of their ever-growing souls.

3. Christians above, as well as below, are *social* beings, and much will they find to gratify and develop this part of their immortal nature in the society of God the Father, Son and Spirit, the angelic inhabitants of Paradise, and the redeemed from among men; especially the society of Jesus, who, as God and man, is both a Divine Savior to be worshipped, and a human brother to sympathise with forever.

4. Christians are unspeakably happy in the Redeemer's presence hereafter, because, unlike their painful experiences here on earth, when noticing how he is "despised and rejected of men," and even "wounded in the house of his friends," they see him to be so *highly honored* and glorified by all their associates.

5. They will unceasingly find opportunities for *activity and usefulness* in the service of their Lord and Master, with no disposition to omit the performance of any duty as ministering spirits from mansion to mansion in the heavenly house on high, and from world to world throughout the boundless dominions of Jehovah.

6. Those favored ones referred to in the text and context, whom the Father has given to the Son in the Covenant of Redemption, including, as we believe, our departed mother and sister, will have the ever-blest assurance that their sublime employments and enjoyments are to be *eternal*; and that they will continually discover in him "whom their soul loveth," *new* beauties and glories through unending ages.

"There they shall see his face,
And never, never sin,
There, through the riches of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in."

* For the sake of brevity, some of the remarks, made in connection with these different heads of discourse, are here omitted.

I hope, dear friends, that your thoughts are not being detained too long on this pleasant and inspiring theme. My main purpose has been to impress it on your hearts that in Christ's presence is "fullness of joy," and that therefore there is occasion to "rejoice," while "sorrowful," when the pious are taken from us. Let it be understood by all present, particularly these mourners, that when Christ prayed for his disciples, that they might be "with him, where he is, to behold his glory," he evinced the peculiar kindness of his heart, and asked for that which is the greatest conceivable good, viz., a heaven which will most delightfully employ all their active powers, not leaving one desire unsatisfied, or a single want unsupplied. My aim is not merely to impart consolations to the bereaved, but to awaken within you longings and pantings after the blessedness of those "with Christ at home;" and lead you, if possible, to more earnest diligence in getting ready therefor, that you may leave the world at last as peacefully, joyously and triumphantly, as did the dear departed whose mortal remains we bury out of sight to-day.

That "midnight call" which I received the latter part of last week, not from the Master himself through the messenger of death, but from our aged Christian friend, who supposed herself to be dying and about to go forth and meet the royal Bridegroom, will never be forgotten by this family or their Pastor, however it may be with others. I came, on that memorable night, from a sick bed at home, to a dying bed in this dwelling, willingly risking comfort and health if I might but instrumentally help one in life's expiring hour to cleave unto Christ, and Christ alone. Yet on reaching here after the unexpected summons, I felt more like sitting at her feet, and encouraging her to be the instructor in those deep spiritual things which engrossed her thoughts, and moved her lips in speech almost inspired. With unwonted strength of mind, and a remarkable clearness of apprehension, was she looking death in the face, or rather looking beyond death to the Lord Jesus Christ in whom was all her hope and trust.

Never did I read David's language when it seemed more appropriate, as contained in the 23d Psalm, than while reading it in her hearing: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He

maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. * * * * Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Oh, those were precious moments in yonder room during the night referred to, as well as before and after,—forever to be remembered,—when some of us found ourselves quite on the verge of heaven, and felt, as did she, the happiest of the happy, that the angels of God were hovering round, and that a sanctified spirit, bathed in the light and the love which streams down from on high, was pluming its wings for a flight to glory.

"Ah," exclaimed she, with much emotion, "I have left many duties undone these years past, but I now feel that the Lord has forgiven my sins, and that my trust is in the merits of his Son." At another time her words were: "I am passing through the waves, but there is one with me on whom I can lean for support." And she has followed close in the footsteps of that youthful granddaughter into the house of our Father above, and the more intimate presence of him who was the chief Beloved of their souls.*

Thus two of the six inmates of this dwelling, one third of the souls here residing, have within a few months been translated to the realms of bliss beyond the skies, rendering this emphatically a "house of mourning," with the brightest lights which have by day and by night illumined these ancient apartments extinguished on earth forever. But the light and the joy of yonder blessed abode is proportionally increased thereby. And surely the hightest happiness of that everlasting world, where Jesus has his principal residence, and where he will ultimately gather all his elected ones, is of vastly more consequence, than your comfort, or mine, amid the evanescent scenes of this transitory state of existence.

For one, I truly love and venerate the *aged*, and should exceedingly delight, if it were God's will, to see them lingering much longer among us, especially, as in the case of Mrs. Harding, when their "grey hairs are a crown of glory, being found in the way of righteousness." And yet if there is ever a time when we

* See Appendix.

find it easier, than at any other time to yield up friends to the chilling embrace of death, or rather the warm and loving arms of Jesus, it is when, in advanced life, at the good old age of three score years and ten, they die, as dies the Christian, with his armor on.* O let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like theirs! The day of their death is better than that of their birth, in the language of Solomon; for the day of their birth ushered them, as you are aware, into a world of trial, sin and temptation; but that of their death introduces them into a world of unsullied and everlasting enjoyments. You may go to them, but they will not return to you. Be ready, O be ready, when the Lord shall call, to meet them on the other shore!

Much has been said and written on the brevity of life, and still more needs to be. When the three score and ten years of human existence on earth is used as a measuring line to immortality beyond, how does it shrink to a mere point. As a single leaf, to the far-extended forest; as the water-drop, to the mighty ocean; as a mote in the sunbeam, when compared to the sun itself; as the smallest pebble, to all the sand on the sea-shore; as the minutest particle of matter, to this vast universe of God;—so is *man's probation to* MAN'S ETERNITY. From the cradle to the coffin of the longest life is a very short stride in one's endless career. Methusaleh had only just *begun* to live when he was called to die at the age of 969; while even Gabriel himself, who was created, as we suppose, ages before Adam and Eve, is merely on the *threshold* of his being, and

> "Has no less days to sing God's praise
> Than when he first begun."

Now, in view of an eternity of enjoyment in the presence of Christ, well may we bear patiently, resignedly, and joyously whatever of suffering is laid upon us during this "inch of time, this moment's space," till our brief earthly mission is accomplished, and we hear a voice from the excellent glory, saying, "Child, your heavenly Father calls, come home, to rest in the embraces of of mine everlasting love."

* During the year 1856 there were 58 deaths in Southbridge. Of these only six were over 70 years of age, and 12 over 50. Average age of the whole, 29.

Be cheered by an assurance of the sympathy of every genuine Christian friend, and of Him whose "name is above every name," who was once "a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," and who can still be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Behold also that "cloud of witnesses" hovering around us to day. Can you not by an "eye of faith," perceive them beckoning you on, and saying, "Persevere, ye afflicted ones; endure even unto the end, and then shall you wear the conqueror's crown?" Some among them can recount sorer trials than any of ours; they can speak of greater difficulties, and severer conflicts; they can tell of darker hours, and persecutions unto a death of cruel martyrdom; of times when no rays of sunlight broke through the clouds of gloom for many days. "But," say they, "we knew the sun was still shining in the heavens, though we discerned not his enlivening beams. We waited with confidence, exclaiming meanwhile, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.' Yea, from the rack and the flame, we ascended to our final home. We trusted, in obedience to our blessed Savior's will; he sustained us, and he will also sustain you." Some of us, my dear friends, have found by sad experience,

"That disasters come not singly,
But as if they watched and waited,
Scanning one another's motions,
When the first descends, the others
Follow, follow, gathering flock-wise
Round their victim, sick and wounded,
First a shadow, then a sorrow,
'Till the air is dark with anguish,"

and we are ready to cry out, in agony of spirit, "All these things are against us; never again can we be glad or happy—nevermore can we wear a smiling countenance, but must go down to the grave mourning for the loved and lost!"

"We feel that we have sorrows wild,
Which in our souls lie buried deep,
Immortal griefs, that none can share
With us, nor eyes like ours may weep."

But on taking another and wiser view of the subject, we are led to reflect that earth's keenest and bitterest sufferings, the most complicated, prolonged, and heart-crushing trials of time, are

"not worthy to be compared with the glories to be revealed" unto all the faithful in "the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness." Yea, the joys unutterable which shall be compressed into the moment of our first welcome home, will more than outweigh and recompense a life-time's calamities.

Christ's love is the origin of the sharpest strokes that ever fell on a desolate bosom. It is because of the exceeding riches of God's grace that trials are sent. Of all love, chastising love is the truest, deepest, tenderest. Those are treated best, whose afflictions are the greatest. Our *days of suffering* we are inclined to style *days of darkness*, but a thousand years hence, when gazing back thereupon, with a broader vision, from the summit of the everlasting hills, we shall call them *days of brightness*, or days which led on to brightness, purity and bliss. Then shall we praise Jehovah Jesus most for all the tears and sorrows of time. We need occasionally to be stript of earthly portions, that we may embrace CHRIST as our all-sufficient portion forever. We need to be turned right out of doors, as it were, yea "out of house and home," or at least out of a permanent residence below, that we may realize we have here "no continuing city, nor abiding place," and be induced to seek an enduring home above.

> "Our hearts are fastened to this world
> By strong and numerous ties,
> But every sorrow cuts a cord,
> And urges us to rise."

And when I have thought of the members of this bereaved household of late, whose repeated disappointments have led them to exclaim, "Have pity upon us, have pity upon us, O ye our friends, for the finger of the Almighty hath touched us," it has seemed as though the Author of my text had been passing along with his sharp knife, cutting one after another the invisible cords which bind the affections of the soul down to earth, and then, taking these precious cords all together, and winding them about his hand of love, is now gently drawing them upward, and entwining them around his everlasting throne, that "where the treasures are, there the heart may be also." Thus the *death* of some, at the very time when their presence and sympathies seem

the most essential to our comfort, becomes the agency, under God, of the *life*, the life *eternal* of others.

May you of this mourning circle, and all those who have assembled here to day, in a house occupied by the deceased for nearly half a century, ponder earnestly these impressive truths, and let them be influential on your lives hereafter. God is speaking, in a "still, small voice," to each and every one of you. Open your ears that you may hear, and your minds that you may understand. "Arise," he says, "for this is not your rest, because it is polluted." Heaven is not here. No satisfying or abiding home can be found on the sin-cursed soil of our globe. Some of you may build what are deemed durable dwellings, with the hope of many years continuance therein, but lo! as was the case here so recently, a cry is heard, perhaps at the solemn hour of midnight, saying, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!" and then, if not before, the soul will feel the need of what the departed so touchingly alluded to among her last audible expressions, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," whither Jesus, the Forerunner, hath gone to "provide mansions" for all his followers, and of being numbered among those "chosen" ones, "given" him by the Father, of whom he says, "I will that they be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory."

Dear fellow travellers to the judgment seat of Christ, *think less of earth, and more of heaven.* "Look not at things seen and temporal, but at things unseen and eternal." Pursue with eagerness "the path by ancient worthies trod." Be *Christ* your "*all in all*" for time and eternity. "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." And O! let nothing ever turn your feet aside from the King's highway of holiness, which conducts upwards to that "Home, sweet Home" of the blest,

> "Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
> Their Savior and brethren transported to greet,
> Where the anthems of pleasure unceasingly roll,
> And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

APPENDIX.

From the Southbridge Press.

Died in this town July 12th 1856, *Miss Elizabeth B. Harding*, only daughter of Mr. Thos. N. Harding, aged 17 years and 10 months.

Seldom has the messenger of death found so shining a mark at which to aim his fatal arrows. And very rarely has any family, or church, or community met with so great a loss in the departure of one of its members.

Lizzie was blessed with a pleasing countenance, an amiable disposition, a cultivated mind and a Christian heart. Therefore truthful and peculiarly applicable, was the hymn sung at the funeral, commencing with the line,

"Sister, thou wast mild and lovely."

At the early age of 15 she united with the Union Church of Globe Village, and has been among its most worthy and exemplary members; while only one of this church has preceded her to the spirit land.* Hers was an unostentatious piety, combined with a gentle and winning deportment; and she had that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God and good men is of great price.

During her last sickness her bodily sufferings were acute, and well nigh insupportable, but she was ever characterized for patience and resignation; her hopes of immortality in heaven constantly brightening until about sundown on Saturday, when hope was changed to glad fruition, faith to sight, and prayer to praise, and she, the beautiful of earth, was permitted to spend her first sabbath in the upper temple, and sing with the redeemed the new and everlasting song.

A large concourse of people attended the funeral of our deceased friend at her father's, on Tuesday, July 15th, when a brief sermon was preached by her Pastor, from the text, "Sufferings—glory," Rom 8 : 18; and in course of some consolatory remarks to the bereaved parents, he quoted the following words of hers, written on the day of the burial of a child of his:

"Thou art gone! No more will those fond parents clasp their daughter in their arms on earth, for the white-robed angel has conveyed thy happy spirit to the mansions of the blest. Never again will thine accents reach the parent's ear, for thou art forever safe in the home of the Savior, where there is no sorrow, sickness, or death, but the former things are passed away. Jesus wanted thee above; therefore thy parents must not grieve that their lovely child has become a resident of Paradise. He saw a tender flower perishing for want of a more genial sun and purer light than earth could afford, and he plucked the drooping floweret and bore it hence where it would revive and flourish forever, 'neath the dazzling glory of the sun of Righteousness, and bloom with far more radiant loveliness in the Garden of Paradise.

Weep not, fond mother, though thy chosen one is now arrayed in a travelling robe to the tomb, and though that dear form is now a lifeless corpse before thee, and soon to be buried in the dark cold grave. Remember that there is a purer land where Jesus still lives, and lives to save the lovely of earth, to whose arms the spirit of your daughter has gone, who will ever enfold and shelter her from dangers which would have surrounded her below; and that now she is safe, forever safe in the home of our Lord. Though your home has been entered and bereft of its brightest jewel, the voice hushed in death and the eye that looked to yours while in sickness for sympathy and relief has closed to open no more below, the voice of God speaks to you amid the gloom, 'Fear not, but trust in me.'

Yes, afflicted ones, trust your child to him who has died to ransom from the power of the grave, who is the way, the truth and the life. To him let your full

* Another has since followed. And it is a mysterious fact, worthy of record, that these three deaths have been among the most youthful and promising members of the church, young ladies, who, when professing religion, anticipated a long life of usefulness on earth. Mary Ann Elliott, Elizabeth Brewer Harding, and Nancy James Bellows. Which of the 72 surviving members, 28 of whom joined the church at the time of its organization, 13 during the ministry of Rev. John Cunningham, and 33 since the labors of the last Pastor commenced, will first be summoned to meet that lovely trio of sisters, is known only to Omniscience.

"May each enquire, Am I prepared,
Should I be called to die?"

confidence be given, and you shall meet your child in heaven. 'Tis but the casket that lieth before you ; the dear gem is brightly shining in a land of endless day. Soon you will meet again, and meet to part no more. Then do not grieve, for your dear one is not lost, but saved in Jesus. It will be but a short time, at the longest, ere death will lay your own forms prostrate by her side, and your happy sanctified spirits meet to enjoy a glorious eternity above."

Precious in the Lord is the death of such a saint. Verily, in the language of the funeral text, with its connections, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." Our trying loss is her unspeakable gain. Yes, and a train of blessed influences is left behind her to work out important results for time and eternity. This hurriedly written obituary notice is designed to freshen and perpetuate a recollection of her numerous virtues and striking excellences among the living, for we are assured that she is one of those eminently righteous ones who are to be held in "everlasting remembrance."

As a specimen of the interesting pages of her written journal, which she modestly kept from all eyes except her own while living, but which will be exceedingly prized by her sorrowing acquaintances now that she is dead, we take the liberty of quoting a few suggestive sentences :

"Fitting emblems of life are these clouds of today, which are gone tomorrow. Days of sadness and gloom, of trials and afflictions, await us all. Life indeed presents a checkered scene, composed of dark clouds, and frequent sunbeams, gentle summer showers, and blinding wintry storms. Yet amid all we perceive the halo of heavenly light lingering around, and causing many a sunny spot in life's great history. O may it ever shine around our pathway here below, and conduct us safely at last into our eternal home. What a solemn thought, that each day we are journeying to our tombs, but not there to sleep unconscious, ah, no! for one has descended into the dark valley, and lit up those tombs with an unearthly radiance, that naught on earth can extinguish.

How many within the past year, even in our own quiet village, have entered those silent halls of death! How many fond hearts are grieving for the loved ones gone before—that have been early called away in the providence of a merciful Father. Perchance they are even now watching and waiting for our entrance into the celestial courts above. If we live the life that God requires, we shall meet again to part no more in heaven. Then weep not that they are forever sheltered from the beating storms that sweep o'er all in the present life, but rather prepare to meet them in a world where storms never reach, and where trials never come and where death never enters to snap the golden cords asunder and render life a dark and dreary way."

Again she writes, "A week ago to-day I attended church, and was present at that affecting scene, the Lord's supper. How vividly it reminded me of a similar one enacted in one of the upper chambers of a dwelling in the olden time! when Christ himself was present at the feast, aye, and those holy disciples also were gathered, a little band of true believers, to commemorate for the first time with him who was about to be crucified for the sins of the world, his undying love, and for the last time to sup with him face to face until they met in their Father's kingdom. Sorrowfully, perchance, was that feast commemorated, for they would no more see that loved countenance at their table, or hear that well-known voice, reminding them to walk in the ways of God, and forget not those hallowed teachings, or his own divine example. * * * * * Precious Jesus! Though storms arise to darken the skies, thy light will ever beam purer and more transparent, till the sunshine of undazzled glory breaks upon our view in that 'better land.' Songs that entrance the ear below are naught compared with the glorious strains that swell from the lips of that beauteous company, the redeemed, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."'

The beloved author of these affecting, impressive and almost prophetic words, here laid aside her pen, to resume it but a few times more ere she was called (who can doubt ?) to participate in the blissful scenes she had been describing, and exchange the sufferings of earth for the glories of Heaven!

LINES

Suggested by the death of Miss Elizabeth Harding, aged 17 years and 10 months.

BY WILLIAM R. LAWRENCE.

"Jesus saw a tender flower perishing for want of genial sun and purer light than earth could afford, and he plucked the drooping floweret and bore it hence where it would revive and flourish 'neath the dazzling glory of the Sun of Righteousness, and bloom with far more radiant loveliness in the Garden of Paradise above."

[Extract from a letter by Miss Harding.

Another loved one gone
To mansions of the blest!
Another angel born
To an eternal rest!

In all its sweetest bloom
The flower was borne away,
To wither in the tomb,
To turn again to clay.

But yet, her soul so pure
Can never, never die;
But will for aye endure
In joy beyond the sky.

Her life was not in vain,
Though dead she speaketh still,*
Her, ye may meet again,
If ye but do his will,

Who led her tender feet
Through life's dark painful hours,
To where clean waters meet
Among fair thornless flowers.

Then heed the loved one gone
To mansions of the blest,
An angel early born
To Heaven's celestial rest.

Hartford, Conn.

From the Puritan Recorder.

MRS. MELINDA HARDING.

Died, in Globe Village, Southbridge, January 3d, 1857, Mrs. Melinda Harding, aged 74 years. Mrs. Harding was a native of Sturbridge, from which place she moved to her last earthly residence about forty years ago, and, so far as the memory of our oldest inhabitants extends backward into the past, has lived such a benevolent and exemplary life as to secure the esteem of all her acquaintances. She was one of nine daughters, five of whom survive in the enjoyment of that religion which sustained her so remarkably in the hour of death.

She was a woman not only of unusual evenness of temper, but of uncommon strength of mind, to the close of life. Although unable to attend church for many months prior to her decease, except on rare occasions, her heart was with the people of God when assembled for his worship, and her pastor has been greatly strengthened by a knowledge of her warm sympathies and fervent prayers. Her last sickness was brief and her death sudden; but she was like that servant whom the Lord when he cometh finds watching. A little past the hour of midnight, on the morning before her death, she spoke of "feeling that she was about to enter her heavenly home," and added, "I should like to hear the minister's voice in prayer once more."

Accordingly her pastor was immediately sent for to administer the consolations of the Gospel to one in life's expiring hour, and assist her by the reading of Scripture, prayer and counsel, to cleave only unto Christ, the sinner's friend and the saint's eternal portion. He found her with a peculiar clearness of apprehension, looking death calmly in the face, or rather looking beyond death to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom was all her hope and trust. There were indeed precious scenes in that ancient habitation on the night referred to, as well as before and after; scenes forever to be remembered, when those who visited her found themselves "quite on the verge of heaven." Calm and joyous and triumphant was her exit, leaving behind to sorrowing friends no lingering doubt, but their loss is her immortal gain, and that the prayer of Christ, as contained in the funeral text, included her in its wide reachings through all time; "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory."

W. C. W

* The gifted writer of these poetical lines has within a few months "gone the way of all the earth." But "though dead, he speaketh still."